

# HRO HIGHLIGHTS and TRAINING NOTES



Human Resources Office

<http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/>

November 2000



## Important Employee Action Items

**Human Resources Service  
Center Contacts**  
(See Page 10 for details)

**Blood Drive**  
Nov 16 – Bldg. 222

**CFC**  
Runs until Nov 17

**Health Benefits Open Season**  
Nov 13 – Dec 11

**TSP Open Season**  
Nov 15, 2000 – Jan 31, 2001

**FEHB Health Fair**  
Nov 15 – Bldg. 222 Exhibit Room  
(10 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

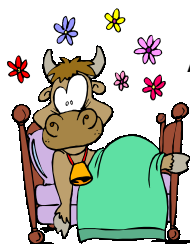
**Announcement of Awards**  
(See Page 11 for details)

**UPCOMING TRAINING DATES**  
(See Page 12 for details)

**NRL DEMO on the web at**  
<http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/hr-demo/>

## Give the Gift of Life or Leave

*Lynn Granados  
Code 1850*



As an NRL or ONR employee, you are entitled to 7 days excused absence each calendar year to serve as a bone marrow donor and 30 days to serve as an organ donor. When in an excused absence status, you receive full pay with no charge to your own leave. If the 7 and 30-day periods are insufficient to cover the necessary time, contact your servicing Employee Relations Office for information on seeking management's discretionary approval of more time. If still more time is needed, supervisors should be liberal in granting other forms of leave, including advance Sick Leave.

While you are spending this time giving thanks for the health and well being of your loved ones, you might want to consider that some NRL employees haven't been so fortunate. NRL employees listed below have been approved to receive annual leave donated under NRLINST 12630.1a, Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, based on a medical or family emergency. ONR employees may contact the ONR Human Resources Office on eligible ONR employees.

Robin Ward, Code 1820, is on bed rest due to physical complications that put her at risk for premature childbirth.

Continued...

## What's inside this issue...

Long-Term Training Application Deadline .....	2
*Summer Employment Program Announcement .....	2
*Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) New Funds .....	3
*One-Stop Government Web Site Debuts .....	4
*IRS Federal Payment Levy Program .....	4
*Health Benefits Open Season .....	5
*FEHB Premium Conversion – Survivor Annuitants .....	5
*Your Rights to Federal Records .....	6
*Long-Term Care Legislation Signed .....	7
Common Sense Regarding Alcohol Consumption .....	7
Your Social Security Statement is Coming (Again) .....	7
*Do Savings Bonds Stop Earning Interest? .....	7
*FEHB Program Mental Health Parity .....	8
Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season .....	9
*Two New Sites on Disability Issues .....	9
Children's Survivor Annuity Benefits .....	10
Latest TSP Return Rates .....	10
Announcement of Awards .....	11
<b>TRAINING NOTES</b> .....	12
*New Registration and Payment Procedures for Training .....	13

\*\*\*\*\*New Articles of Interest\*\*\*\*\*

### Give the Gift of Life or Leave

Continued...

Wanda Mason, Code 3481, is recovering from a lung removal due to lung cancer.

Brenda Turner, Code 5001, has been sick for over 3 years with hepatitis C from a blood transfusion. She is awaiting a new medication right now, which will put her in remission.

Loretta Cady's, Code 5650, son was involved in a shallow water accident on July 4, 1999 and is paralyzed from the chest area down. She is his main caretaker and works here part-time (her usual schedule is 6 hours a day Monday-Friday, but as a result of his accident she's been working about 3 days a week for 4 hours).

Pavel Pisek, Code 7332 and Denise Stewart, Code 8212.

Below is an individual who has applied for donated leave to facilitate spending time recovering from childbirth and caring for a newborn:

Megan Clow, Code 8102

### Long-Term Training Application Deadline

Lauren Bowie  
Code 1810



Approved applications for long-term training are due to the Human Resources Office, Code 1810, by February 1, 2001. Applications submitted after this date will not be accepted.

NRL sponsors four programs intended to keep professional employees abreast of advances in their fields or to enable them to take additional job-related graduate courses (not for the purpose of acquiring a degree). The four competitive programs are the Edison Memorial Graduate Training Program, the Select Graduate Training Program, the Naval Postgraduate School Program, and the Advanced Graduate Research (Sabbatical) Program.

The Advanced Graduate Research Program has been extended to include "sabbaticals" internal to NRL. These internal sabbaticals can be spent at NRL Washington DC, NRL Stennis Space Center, and NRL Monterey, or involve assignments between NRL sites. They will be subject to all the rules and requirements of the existing Advanced Graduate Research Program.

Applications for all of the programs require narrative rationale, various levels of approval, background material, completion of standard forms, and recommendation letters.

All four programs are competitive and require applicants to have a bachelor's or master's degree in a field appropriate to the requested area of study. Additionally, the candidates must have demonstrated the ability for advanced study, recognized stature in their field, and minimum service at NRL. One year of employment at NRL is required for the Edison Memorial and Select Graduate programs. A minimum of two years of service at NRL is

required for the Naval Postgraduate School Program and the Advanced Graduate Research Program requires at least six years federal civil service, four years at NRL.

For further information about applications or approval procedures, contact Lauren Bowie at (202) 767-8314.

### Summer Employment Program Announcement



The Summer Student Employment Program announcement will open on December 15, 2000 and close on February 9, 2001. Summer employment opportunities are available for students in engineering, physical science, mathematics, computer science, and clerical fields. Further information will be provided in Labstracts and in Billboard in January. Copies of the announcement will be available on December 15 in the Human Resources Office, Bldg. 72N. If you need additional information, please contact Lauren Bowie on (202) 767-8314 or Kathy Weaver on (202) 404-8305.

### HRO HIGHLIGHTS

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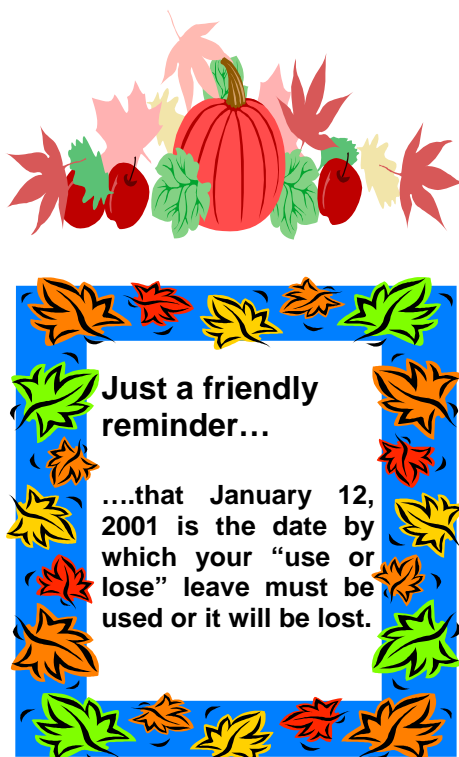
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Just a friendly  
reminder...

....that January 12,  
2001 is the date by  
which your "use or  
lose" leave must be  
used or it will be lost.

## Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) New Funds



The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board has announced that TSP participants will be able to begin investing in the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund in **May 2001**. The new S and I funds will be in addition to the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund, Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund, and Government Securities Investment (G) Fund, which are the current investment choices available to participants. Below are questions and answers regarding the implementation of the S and I Funds in the current TSP record keeping system.

**Why is the TSP implementing the new Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund in the current system?** In June 2000, after the TSP announced the extension of the deferral of the new record keeping system, they conferred with their record keeper, the National Finance Center, to determine if the current record keeping system could be modified to include the S and I Funds, the most anticipated of the pending TSP enhancements. The TSP has now determined that such a modification can be made. Accordingly, they plan to make the S and I Funds available within the framework of the current system on May 1, 2001. (More information about the S and I Funds is available in the **May 2000 TSP Highlights** available from the TSP web site at <http://www.tsp.gov>.)

**Will other features (such as daily valuation, daily interfund transfers, and partial and mixed withdrawals) be available on May 1, 2001?** Once the S and I Funds are incorporated into the current system, you will be able to change the way your payroll contributions are being invested in the five funds

at any time, instead of only during a TSP open season. (You will also continue to be able to make an interfund transfer to change the way the balance in your account is invested. However, interfund transfers will still occur only once a month because accounts will remain monthly valued.) You will be able to accomplish either of these transactions by using the TSP web site, the ThriftLine, or by mailing a TSP Investment Allocation form to the TSP at the address on the form. Like daily valuation and daily processing of interfund transfer requests, the other enhancements to the TSP (e.g., daily disbursements, and partial and mixed withdrawals) cannot be included in the current system. Consequently, they will not be available until the new system is implemented, which will be as soon as possible after May 1, 2001. (Monthly reports on progress toward implementation of the new system will continue to be posted on the TSP web site.) The leaflet **How the TSP is Changing** explains the enhancements and the changes to the TSP that will occur when the new record keeping system is implemented. The leaflet is available from the TSP web site in Forms & Publications.

**What is the status of H.R. 208?** H.R. 208 is pending legislation that would permit the TSP to accept transfers from certain other retirement savings plans (see below). H.R. 208 would also allow new Federal employees to contribute their own money (through payroll contributions) to the TSP without the current six- to twelve-month wait. Versions of H.R. 208 with slight differences between them have now been passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. The TSP is waiting to see if final legislative action to resolve the differences will occur before the congressional adjournment scheduled for October. An implementation date will be decided if and when the legislation is enacted.



**Does H.R. 208 mean that I can roll over my regular IRA into the TSP? How about money from my mutual fund or savings account?** No. H.R. 208 would allow direct rollovers from certain retirement plans established by your previous employer. These plans are limited to pension, profit-sharing, and stock bonus plans, and include 401(k) plans. Although a modified version of H.R. 208 would allow rollovers from conduit IRAs, rollovers from regular IRAs would not be allowed. If H.R. 208 is enacted, the TSP will provide information describing which funds will be accepted by the TSP and the process for rolling them over.

**What waiting period is affected by H.R. 208?** Currently, newly hired employees must wait until the second open season after they are hired (a six- to twelve-month period) before they can contribute to the TSP. H.R. 208 would permit employees to begin contributing their own money (through payroll contributions) to the TSP as soon as they are hired if they are otherwise eligible to contribute to the Plan (i.e., they are covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System, the Civil Service Retirement System, or another equivalent retirement system). However, unless the current provisions of H.R. 208 are modified (which is possible), the existing waiting periods would still apply to agency contributions (both the Agency Automatic (1%) and the Agency Matching Contributions).

**What is the schedule for participant statement mailings?** The next participant statement mailing will be in November 2000, as usual. There will be no change in the TSP's semiannual participant statement mailing schedule until new system implementation.

**Will the deferral of the new system implementation mean that loans and withdrawals will continue to be disbursed once a month?** Yes. Until the new system is implemented, loans and withdrawals, as well

Continued...

### TSP New Funds

Continued...

as all other transactions, will be processed using the existing record keeping system and under current rules.

**Will the deferral of the new system implementation apply to the new withdrawal options?** Yes. The new withdrawal options and the other changes to the TSP withdrawal program, which were described in the leaflet ***How the TSP is Changing***, cannot be implemented until the new record keeping system is implemented.

**When will I be able to receive any loan or withdrawal payment by EFT/Direct Deposit?** Additional EFT/Direct Deposit options will become available when the new system is implemented. EFT/Direct Deposit is currently available for monthly payments only.

**When will I be able to request a loan or withdrawal from the TSP web site or ThriftLine?** Because this is a new record keeping system feature, you will not be able to use the web site or the ThriftLine to apply for a loan or withdrawal until the new system is implemented.

**When will I be able to make direct payments on my loan by submitting guaranteed funds to the TSP?** Because this is a feature of the new record keeping system, you will have to wait until the new system is implemented before making loan payments by guaranteed funds directly to the TSP (as opposed to payroll deductions). Currently, you may only make prepayments in full.



### One-Stop Government Web Site Debuts



Need to find the nearest Veterans' hospital? Want to track your Social Security benefits? You can now contact most government agencies and find information by logging on to a single web site at <http://firstgov.gov/>. This new one-stop web site consolidates over 20,000 government web sites into one. It is designed to help employees find the information they need quicker and easier.

### Turkey as the National Bird?

If Benjamin Franklin had had his way, the turkey – not the bald eagle – would be our national bird. He lobbied for it in the Continental Congress, arguing that the wild turkey was a better choice because it was native to North America and early settlers had relied on it for food. He also said it looked noble. But he was outvoted by a large margin.

### IRS Federal Payment Levy Program

Janet Deschak  
Code 1850

In July 2000, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) implemented the Federal Payment Levy Program (FPLP). Under this program, certain individuals and businesses with unpaid tax bills may be subject to a continuous 15 percent levy on money due them from the Federal Government.

In its initial phase, the FPLP allows the IRS to reduce federal retirement benefits paid to individuals through the Office of Personnel Management and federal payments to vendors doing business with the Government. Later, the program will expand to include federal employee salaries, some Social Security benefits and other federal payments. Federal payments to a delinquent taxpayer will not be included under certain circumstances, for example, when a taxpayer is in bankruptcy, in a hardship situation or has applied for relief as an innocent or injured spouse. The levy program will not apply to certain types of federal insurance payments, including SSI payments.

Delinquent taxpayer accounts will be matched against pending federal payments. When a match is found, IRS will send the taxpayer a final notice of levy with appeal rights if one has not already been issued. If the taxpayer does not respond, the IRS will electronically implement the levy, and any federal payments subject to the levy will be reduced by 15 percent. When fully implemented, the program is projected to bring in an additional \$478 million in revenues annually.

A taxpayer whose federal payments are subject to levy under this program may contact IRS to resolve the issue by paying the tax bill, entering into an installment agreement or proposing an offer in compromise. The determination of whether to make a continuous levy under the program will be made on a case-by-case basis. If you think you may have a tax bill that could be subject to levy, contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

## Health Benefits Open Season



This year's Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Open Season will run from November 13 through December 11, 2000. FEHB Open Season is the time of year when eligible Federal employees and annuitants have the opportunity to change health plans or options for the following year.

FEHB Guides (Plan Comparison Charts), individual FEHB plan brochures, and the Open Season enrollment form (SF-2809), can be obtained from the locations listed below or from web site <http://www.opm.gov/insure/>. The PlanSmart Choice (PSC) is a web-based decision-making tool available to FEHB enrollees to assist you in choosing a health plan best suited to your needs and is available on the web site above. After logging on to the web site, select **FEHB**, select **Health Plan Selection**. All health plans available to Federal employees are in the PSC database. After asking a series of questions about the aspects of a health plan that are important to you, the Tool compares your preferences and tells you which plan appears to match your preferences best.

NRL-DC  
Forms Supply Store  
Code 5261.2  
Bldg.222, Rm. 174

NRL-Stennis  
Facilities (Mail Room)  
Code 7030.3  
Bldg. 1007, Rm. 37

NRL- Monterey  
Administrative Office  
Code 7502  
Bldg. 702, Rm. 216

ONR  
Administrative Offices

The Virginia – Prudential HealthCare HMO plan is dropping out of FEHB in 2001. If you are enrolled in this plan

and do not change your health plan during Open Season, you **will not** have health benefits for 2001.

The Maryland – Prudential HealthCare HMO and Aetna U. S. Healthcare Plan will be merged and become Aetna U. S. Healthcare at the end of 2000. Enrollees in the old plans will be transferred automatically to the gaining plans and do not need to take action. **Enrollees in the old plans must choose different plans during open season in order to not be transferred to the new plans.**

Administrative Officers should ensure that all of their division employees, including those on leave-without-pay, are made aware of the FEHB Open Season and are provided a copy of all Open Season literature upon their request. Employees need to check their FEHB health plan brochures carefully to determine if there have been changes to their plan's premiums, service areas or benefits that will affect them.

If an FEHB Open Season election is made by NRL employees, the enrollment form should be mailed to the Department of the Navy, Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC-NE), ATTN: Benefits (Code 51.1), 111 South Independence Mall East, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2598. NRL employees may use the NRL Mail Service; however, you need to be aware that there could be a delay of 1 to 5 days because of pick-up schedules, weekends and holidays before NRL mail to the HRSC-NE is forwarded. ONR employees will be provided additional information at a later date of where to send completed forms.

**Coverage under a new health plan will be effective January 14, 2001.** You will remain covered and receive benefits under your old plan until coverage under the new plan becomes effective.



## Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Premium Conversion – Survivor Annuitants

Beginning October 8, 2000, premium conversion for FEHB Program participants went into effect. Premium conversion reduces your taxable income by the amount of your health insurance premium, resulting in tax savings. However, this premium conversion does not apply to survivor annuitants.

If you are a survivor annuitant and an active Federal employee in a position that conveys FEHB eligibility, such as a permanent position, you are eligible for FEHB Premium Conversion as an employee. You may find it financially beneficial to enroll in FEHB as an employee rather than to continue your FEHB as a survivor annuitant. If you are interested in changing your FEHB status from survivor annuitant to employee, contact the Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC-NE), on (215) 408-5619; DSN 243-5619.

## The Great American Smokeout!!!

**November 16, 2000 is the day to throw the packs away!!**

**FREE QUIT SMOKING KITS  
Call Roxanne on 767-6737**

### Your Right to Federal Records



Jan Walker  
Code 1850

The General Services Administration and Department of Justice maintain a joint publication, "Your Right to Federal Records - Questions and Answers on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act." It guides you in exercising your rights and is available at [www.usdoj.gov/oip/foia\\_rights.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/oip/foia_rights.htm). Following are some excerpts:

**The FOIA** gives you the right to request access to Federal agency records or information. Agencies must disclose records, except those protected by these exemptions and exclusions. Exemptions: (1) Classified national defense and foreign relations information, (2) internal agency rules and practices, (3) information that is prohibited from disclosure by another law, (4) trade secrets and other confidential business information, (5) inter-agency or intra-agency communications that are protected by legal privileges, (6) information involving matters of personal privacy, (7) certain information compiled for law enforcement purposes, (8) information relating to the supervision of financial institutions, and (9) geological information on wells. The exclusions pertain to especially sensitive law enforcement and national security matters.

Suppose you have heard that a certain toy has been recalled as a safety hazard and you want to know the details. The Consumer Product Safety Commission could provide copies of the recall documents. Perhaps you want the latest inspection report on conditions at a nursing home certified for Medicare. Your local Social Security office keeps such records. Or you might want to know if the Department of Veterans Affairs has a file that mentions you. In all of these examples, you could use the FOIA to request information from the appropriate federal agency.

**The Privacy Act** establishes controls over how executive branch agencies gather, maintain, and disseminate personal information. (See NRLINST 5211.2E of March 17, 2000; all employees received a copy.) It also can be used to access information, but it pertains only to records that the Federal government keeps about individual U.S. citizens and lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens. The Government maintains a lot of information on individuals. For example, if you were ever in the military or employed by a Federal agency, there should be records of your service. If you have ever applied for a federal benefit or received a government-guaranteed student loan, you are probably the subject of a file. There are records on every individual who has ever paid income taxes or received a check from Social Security or Medicare.

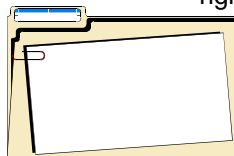
The Privacy Act guarantees three primary rights: (1) to see records about oneself, subject to the Act's exemptions; (2) to amend that record if it is inaccurate, irrelevant, untimely, or incomplete; and (3) to sue the Government for violations of the Act, including permitting others to see your records, unless specifically permitted by the Act. It also limits agency information practices, such as requiring that information about you be collected from you to the greatest extent practicable and requiring agencies to ensure that their records are relevant, accurate, timely, and complete.

The Privacy Act applies to executive branch records only if they are in a "system of records," which means they are retrieved by an individual's name, social security number, or some other personal identifier. It does not apply to information about individuals in records that are filed under other subjects, such as organizations or events, unless the agency also indexes and retrieves them by individual names or other personal identifiers.

Privacy Act exemptions allow agencies to withhold certain kinds of information from you. Examples of exempt records are those containing classified information on national security and those concerning criminal investigations. Another exemption is that which protects information that would identify a confidential source. For example, if an investigator questions a person about your qualifications for Federal employment and that person agrees to answer only if his identity is protected, then his name or any information that would identify him can be withheld.

**Requesting Information about Other People.** The Privacy Act's access rights are given only to the individual who is the subject of the records sought; the FOIA's access rights are given to "any person."

Under FOIA, you can request information about other people, but it might be withheld to protect their personal privacy. One exemption permits an agency to withhold information about individuals if disclosing it would be "a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." This includes, for example, almost all of the information in medical and financial benefit files and much of the information in personnel files. Another exemption similarly protects personal privacy interests in law enforcement records. Neither exemption can be used to deny you access to information about yourself, only to deny you information about other persons. To decide whether to withhold information, an agency must balance personal privacy interests against any public interest that would be served by disclosure.



## Long-Term Care Legislation Signed



President Clinton signed the Long-Term Care Security Act on September 19, 2000. This Act directs the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish and administer a program through which Federal employees and annuitants, current and retired members of the uniformed services, and their qualified relatives may obtain long-term care insurance through a qualified carrier.

Long-term care insurance provides coverage for long-term care needs such as nursing home care, home health care, assisted living facilities, adult day care, and personal care/homemaker care.



These are services that are typically excluded from health insurance coverage because they are considered "custodial care." Insured individuals are responsible for 100 percent of the charges for coverage.

Under the long-term legislation, qualified relatives are defined as spouses and children 18 and older (including adopted children, step-children, and foster children) of employees, annuitants, and current and retired members of the uniformed services, as well as parents, stepparents, and parents-in-law of employees and current uniformed service members.

OPM will be working to establish the program so long-term care insurance will be available by October 2002. Additional information concerning long-term care insurance is on OPM's web site at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc/index.htm>. In the coming months, there will be much to learn about this new program and updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

## Common Sense Regarding Alcohol Consumption



Ralph Surette, Ph.D.  
NRL-DC C/RS

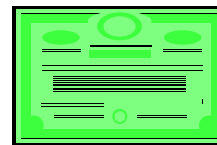
- If alcohol is causing you problems, then you have a problem with alcohol.
- Clearly understand that once you have passed into problematic use of alcohol, you can never learn to drink moderately.
- Alcoholism is when drinking causes more problems than pleasure and when you cannot predict the effects of your drinking.
- Realize that anyone who desires to can learn to live happily without alcohol.
- Realize that being abstinent and being sober are completely different.
- Anyone can learn to be happy without mood altering chemicals.
- Talk to someone (clergy person, CR/S counselor, your doctor) about your drinking and its effects on your spiritual, emotional and medical well being.



## Your Social Security Statement is Coming (Again)

October began the second annual mailing of Social Security Statements to workers age 25 or older who are not already receiving benefits on their own earnings record. As a worker, the contributions you and your employer make pay for Social Security benefits. In addition to providing estimates of future Social Security benefits, the Statement helps you see whether your earnings, or self-employment income, are posted correctly on your Social Security record. Take the time to read it and check the numbers. Look for your statement to arrive about three months before your birthday. It is intended to help you plan your financial future.

## Do Savings Bonds Stop Earning Interest?



Yes they do. It's important to periodically check bonds to make sure that

they're still earning interest. This is especially true for Series E bonds and savings notes since (unlike H and HH series) they don't receive regular payments. You can determine if your bonds have stopped earning interest through information at web site <http://www.publicdebt-treas.gov/sav/savstop.htm>.



## National Sandwich Day

This day marks the birth on November 3, 1718, of John Montague, the Fourth Earl of Sandwich. He was the British politician credited with inventing and naming the sandwich. According to historians, he was gambling in a day-long card session in 1762 and did not want to break up the game to eat. He hit on the idea of putting slices of meat between toast as a way of eating with one hand, without interrupting the game.



### Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Mental Health Parity



One significant improvement in the 2001 FEHB Program is Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity. Health benefits carriers are to achieve "parity" for substance abuse treatment benefits, but the large majority of attention is focused on mental health benefits. Below are questions and answers regarding the new "parity" benefits. Health plans vary in their approach, so check your health plan brochure for specific coverage details.

**What is mental health and substance abuse parity?** Parity means that benefits coverage for a FEHB plan's mental health, substance abuse treatment, medical, surgical, and hospital providers will have the same limitations and cost-sharing, such as deductibles, coinsurance, and copays. Historically, health plans have applied higher patient cost-sharing and shorter stay and visit limits to mental health and substance abuse services than they did to services for physical illness, injury, or disease. Beginning in January 2001, this practice will stop when patients use plan providers and follow a treatment regimen approved by their plan.

**What diagnoses will be covered under the FEHB mental health and substance abuse benefits in 2001?** When patients use plan providers and follow a treatment regimen approved by their plan, all diagnostic categories of mental health and substance abuse conditions listed in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM IV)* will be covered. Examples of covered diagnoses include:

- Schizophrenia (including schizoaffective disorder)
- Bipolar (manic depressive) disorder
- Major depression

- Obsessive compulsive and panic disorders
- Attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder
- Tourette's syndrome
- Substance and alcohol dependence and abuse

**How will health plans manage mental health and substance abuse care under parity?** The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has encouraged health plans to manage mental health and substance abuse care in order to expand the coverage cost effectively while maintaining quality service. The goal of managing care is to authorize only appropriate and cost-effective treatment. This process can include directing you to a specific provider, requiring you to get prior authorization from the plan for non-emergency services, and requiring you to follow a treatment regimen authorized by the plan. The authorization process may require you to call a phone number so the health plan can assess your needs and refer you to an appropriate provider to treat your condition. Some health plans will manage your care through managed behavioral health care organizations (MBHO) and their networks of providers, while others will manage it through their own provider networks and internal processes. The health plan or its MBHO will typically review your provider's prescribed services to make sure that they follow standard practice and are appropriate for your condition.

**What is a managed behavioral health care organization (MBHO)?** An MBHO is a company that contracts with health plans to provide a range of behavioral health services to the plan's enrollees. MBHOs specialize in managing care in the mental health and substance abuse fields so they are uniquely equipped to help you receive the best care available for your condition. MBHOs manage your care by authorizing only appropriate and effective treatment.

**What should I do if my health plan does not approve the treatment plan recommended by my provider?** Under the FEHB Program you have the right to appeal a treatment denial to your health plan, and then on to OPM if your appeal is not resolved to your satisfaction. OPM's Disputed Claims process is contained in your benefits brochure and on OPM's web site <http://www.opm.gov/insure/>, or you can call your health plan for details on the process. OPM's review of disputes about health plan treatment regimens will be based on their assessment of the appropriateness of the services prescribed. They generally will not order payment or provision of one appropriate treatment regimen in favor of another.

**Can I see a provider of my choice or do I have to see a provider in my health plan's network?** That depends on the health plan that you select. Some have coverage for providers who are not in the health plan's network; others do not. The FEHB Program offers a variety of health plan types including fee-for-service plans, preferred provider organizations, health maintenance organizations, and point-of-service options. All fee-for-service plans, preferred provider organizations, and some point-of-service options offer coverage for providers outside the health plan's network for mental health and substance abuse services. Health maintenance organizations usually limit benefits coverage to providers participating in their networks. Please check your health plan's benefit brochure to see if it provides coverage for providers outside of its network. Remember, if your health plan provides coverage outside of its network, your out-of-pocket costs for these services will be significantly greater than if you use providers in your health plan's network. Also, keep in mind that certain services may only be covered when you receive them from providers in your health plan's network. Check with your health plan for coverage details.

## Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season



The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season will run from November 15, 2000 Through January 31, 2001. During this time, eligible employees may begin contributions, change the amount of contributions, or allocate contributions among the three investment funds.

You may make a TSP election this open season if your latest appointment to a Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) or Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) position was made before July 1, 1999, or if your latest appointment to a FERS or CSRS position was made before January 1, 2000, and you were eligible to participate in the TSP during a prior open season. If, however, you stopped your contributions after July 31, 2000, you may not begin contributing again until the next open season, which begins May 15, 2001.

You may distribute your contributions among any of the three Investment Funds: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund, the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund, and the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund.

FERS-covered employee's investment elections apply to all contributions to their TSP accounts, i.e., employee contributions, agency automatic (1%), and agency matching contributions. If you are a FERS employee and are not eligible to make employee contributions because you stopped contributing after July 31, 2000, you may still distribute your agency automatic (1%) contributions among any of the funds. If you do not make an investment election, all of your

agency (1%) contributions will be invested in the G Fund until you make such an election.

To make a TSP election, or to change your TSP status, employees may obtain an Election Form, TSP-1, from web site <http://www.tsp.gov> or from the following locations:

NRL-DC  
Forms Supply Store  
Code 5261.2  
Bldg.222, Rm. 174

NRL-Stennis  
Facilities (Mail Room)  
Code 7030.3  
Bldg. 1007, Rm. 37

NRL- Monterey  
Administrative Office  
Code 7502  
Bldg. 702, Rm. 216

ONR  
Administrative Offices

NRL employees should return all copies of the completed form to Department of the Navy, Human Resources Service Center, Northeast (HRSC-NE), ATTN: Benefits (Code 51.1), 111 South Independence Mall East, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2598. NRL employees may use the NRL Mail Service; however, you need to be aware that there could be a delay of 1 to 5 days because of pick-up schedules, weekends and holidays before NRL mail to the HRSC-NE is forwarded. ONR employees will be provided additional information, at a later date, on where to send their completed forms. If your Election Form, TSP-1, is received before January 13, 2001, your election will be effective January 14, 2001. If received later, the effective date will be the first day of the first full pay period after it has been received by HRSC-NE.

## Two New Sites on Disability Issues

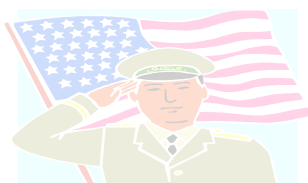
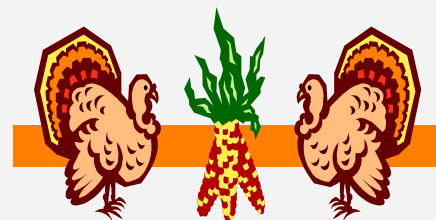


On July 26, 2000, in conjunction with the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, President Clinton announced a new web site, Access America for People with Disabilities or [disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov) (<http://www.-disability.gov/>). This site, created by the Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities, will serve as a one-stop information source on Federal programs, services, and resources of interest to Americans with disabilities, their families, employers, and service providers. It will also serve to promote awareness of disability issues to the general public.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently announced the People with Disabilities web page: <http://www.opm.-gov/disability/index.htm>. OPM built this site to educate and inform human resources professionals, employees, managers, and people with disabilities. The site has links to important information needed to help people with disabilities find a job.

## Thanksgiving November 23

Thanksgiving is the first national holiday to have been presidentially-proclaimed. George Washington, acting on recommendations from Congress, declared November 26 as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer. He urged Americans to be especially grateful for the opportunity to peaceably establish a government that provided for their safety and happiness.



**Veterans Day  
November 10**



## Children's Survivor Annuity Benefits

The law provides survivor annuity benefits for eligible children of deceased Federal employees and annuitants. The annuitant does not elect these benefits, does not pay for the benefits, and cannot prevent the children from receiving the benefits. Children's benefits are payable whether or not an adult survivor is being paid.

To be eligible for benefits a child must be unmarried, under age 18, and must have been dependent on the deceased employee or retiree. A child is dependent on the deceased employee or retiree if he or she is (1) born within wedlock, (2) adopted, (3) a stepchild or recognized child born out of wedlock who lived with the employee or retiree in a regular parent-child relationship, or (4) a recognized child born out of wedlock for whom a judicial determination of support was made or for whom the employee or retiree made regular and substantial contributions.

In addition, an unmarried child age 18 or over and incapable of self-support because of a disability that began before age 18 is eligible, as is an unmarried child who is a full-time student age 18 to 22.

Public Law 104-208 of September 1996 allows the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to restore survivor annuity benefits to children who lost eligibility due to marriage but subsequently divorced while still meeting the other eligibility requirements, discussed above.

A child's annuity is paid to his or her legal guardian if a court has appointed such a person. If there is no legal guardian, payments will be made, at OPM's discretion, to the person who is responsible for the child. When a student beneficiary reaches age 18, OPM will send the payments directly to the student if he or she asks them to do so.

## Human Resources Service Center Contacts:

**Branch hours:** 7:00am – 3:30pm

**Email:** [BENEFITS\\_NE@ne.hroc.navy.mil](mailto:BENEFITS_NE@ne.hroc.navy.mil)

### Health Insurance Benefits:

Email above address or call Duwanda Chavis on (215) 408-5619; DSN 243-5619.

### Life Insurance/TSP Benefits:

Email above address or call Diane Barrett on (215) 408-5065; DSN 243-5065.

### Retirement Benefits:

Email above address or call Ken Bluford on (215) 408-5069; DSN 243-5069.



## LATEST TSP RETURN RATES

Month	C Fund	F Fund	G Fund
Oct 99	6.34%	0.38%	0.53%
Nov 99	2.00%	(0.01%)	0.51%
Dec 99	5.90%	(0.45%)	0.54%
Jan 00	(5.03%)	(0.34%)	0.56%
Feb 00	(1.93%)	1.22%	0.53%
Mar 00	9.74%	1.32%	0.55%
Apr 00	(2.98%)	(0.29%)	0.52%
May 00	(2.05%)	(0.03%)	0.54%
Jun 00	2.44%	2.07%	0.53%
Jul 00	(1.56%)	0.89%	0.53%
Aug 00	6.19%	1.46%	0.52%
Sep 00	(5.27%)	0.64%	0.49%
Last 12 Months 10/1999–9/2000	13.19%	7.05%	6.54%

## Announcement of Awards

Nominations for the following awards are due as indicated below to the NRL Human Resources Office, Code 1850, or the ONR Training Branch. Contact these offices for detailed criteria.

### NRL Award for Excellence in Mission Support

*Due January 2, 2001*



This award is bestowed on NRL civilian or military employees or teams of employees (in or occupying nonresearch positions) in recognition of significant contributions. Managers may nominate support employees under their supervision and/or support employees who work in other divisions.

### Institute of Navigation Awards

*Due January 15, 2001*



This award will be granted in four categories: **Thurlow Award** (for contributions to the science of navigation, including invention or design of equipment, method(s) developed or research/study); **Hayes Award** (recognizes management officials for outstanding encouragement, inspiration, and support contributing to the advancement of navigation); **Superior Achievement Award** (recognizes contributions to the advancement of navigation, which includes those spanning a period of years or outstanding performance as a practicing navigator during the award year); and **Burka Award** (for outstanding achievement in the preparation of papers contributing to the advancement of navigation and space guidance; the paper must have been published in *Navigation*).

### Arthur S. Fleming Awards

*Due January 15, 2001*

Twelve awards are granted annually to recognize civilian Federal Government employees, who have no more

than fifteen years of government service as of December 31, 2000. Four awards will be made to individuals in the scientific or technical fields ("Scientific"), four to individuals in administrative or executive fields ("Administrative"), and four to individuals in information and technology fields ("Applied Science"). A nomination must be submitted in only one category (i.e. Scientific, Administrative, or Applied Science), although duties may overlap two or more areas. Administrative nominees should have demonstrated exceptional ability in administration, i.e. personnel, finance, labor or law. Scientific nominees should have demonstrated exceptional ability and performance in their field either by carrying out research, by applying technical skills, or by active participation in projects under their supervision. Applied Science nominees should have demonstrated exceptional ability and performance in dealing with systems integration, program development, and information technology.

*The following award nominations may be submitted at anytime:*

### Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Award (DCSA)

This is the highest honorary award that the Secretary of the Navy may confer upon a civilian employee of the DoN. Bestowal is on a highly selective basis to employees who have distinguished themselves by extraordinary service or contributions of major significance to DoN.

### Navy Superior Civilian Service Award (SCSA)

This is the highest honorary award that the Chief of Naval Research may confer on a civilian command employee. This award will be granted to recognize superior civilian service or a contribution that has resulted in exceptional values and/or

benefits to the DoN. This is the second highest honorary award under the Navy Incentive Awards Program.

### Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award (MCSA)

This is the highest award that the NRL Commanding Officer may confer on a civilian employee. This award will be granted to recognize meritorious civilian service or a contribution that has resulted in high values and/or benefits to DoN. This is the third highest honorary award under the Navy Incentive Awards Program.

### Navy Award For Distinguished Achievement in Science

This award is granted by the Secretary of the Navy to recognize pioneering scientific achievements that are extraordinary and significant in nature and that contain the potential of having far-reaching consequence.



### NRL Lifetime Achievement Award

This award was established for bestowal on a highly selective basis to a current NRL civilian employee or team of employees for their continual and extraordinary achievements in the sciences (or engineering) that contribute substantively to the knowledge and capabilities of the nation and the U. S. Navy during a lifetime as an NRL scientist or engineer.

### NRL Award of Merit for Group Achievement

This NRL award may be given at any time for a group contribution comparable to one for which an individual would receive Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award consideration.





## NRL Toastmasters Training

Whatever your goals in life may be, your success depends on your ability to communicate. People who can verbalize their ideas so they are heard, understood, and acted upon, possess one of the most important qualities of life.

You, as an NRL employee or contractor, are fortunate to have two Toastmasters International Clubs at your doorstep. Both NRL Clubs have ongoing communications and leadership programs in which members learn by doing in an atmosphere of understanding and friendship. A basic manual is used for the first ten speeches. Twelve additional advanced manuals cover specific areas of communication, such as Technical Presentations, Speaking to Inform, The Discussion Leaders, Speeches by Management and The Entertaining Speaker. Please feel free to visit or join either NRL club.

### **Forum Club**

First and Third Tuesdays  
of every month  
11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
West Dining Room, Cafeteria  
Bldg. 28  
POC: Dave Fromm  
(202) 404-4670

### **Thomas Edison Club**

Weekly on Thursdays  
12 noon to 1 p.m.  
Bldg. 207, Rm. 157 (Chemistry)  
First Floor, Conference Room  
POC: Leslie Chaplin  
(202) 404-8105

## **HRO Personnel Operations Branch, Training Information**

Training Coordinator: Cheryl Miller, Code 1810

Voice: (202) 767-8323 Fax: (202) 767-8311

Email: [Cmiller@hro1.nrl.navy.mil](mailto:Cmiller@hro1.nrl.navy.mil)

HRO Training Web Site:

<http://amp.nrl.navy.mil/code1800/TRNGMENU.HTM>

Employees are encouraged to develop their skills and continue to gain knowledge to enhance their job performance to better meet the needs of our organization as well as their own goals for growth. The Personnel Operations Branch, NRL HRO continues to support and provide traditional and alternative methods of training for employees. Comments, questions and suggestions are always welcomed and can be sent to Cheryl Miller.

## **Coming Soon**

Details are being worked out for several training opportunities to include information on other local training. Schedules are being developed for HRO-sponsored courses such as Situational Leadership, Management Skills, Gender Communication, Visual Basics, Excel for Scientists and Engineers, C++, Unix and more. Watch for these training opportunities which will be advertised in the monthly HRO Highlights, by email, and on the HRO web site.

## **The Luck of the Wishbone**

The tradition of pulling on a wishbone, the bone overlying the breastbone of a fowl, dates back to around 300 B.C. to the Etruscans a people in central Italy. It began with hens, who were considered prophets since they cackled before laying their eggs, and thus supposedly had the power to foretell the future.

Those concerned about the future would draw a circle on the ground and divide it into the letters of the alphabet. Grains of corn were placed in each section, and a hen would spell out words by picking up kernels in different letter sections. Afterwards, the bird was sacrificed and its collarbone hung out to dry.

Three people would make a wish on the bone: one would make a wish on the intact bone, and two others got a chance to make a wish by pulling on each end. The person who ended up with the larger end of the bone supposedly got his or her wish, and it became known as a "lucky break."

## Registration and Payment Procedures for Training



As described in NRLNOTE 12410 of September 12, 2000, the HRO no longer maintains a G&A budget for generic or technical training. The courses described below in the Training Schedule will indicate which procedure NRL employees should follow to register for their course selection. Remember that submission of a DD-1556 or an In-House Nomination Form is only a ***nomination to attend; you must receive a confirmation of course attendance before you are officially scheduled to attend the class of choice.*** To receive confirmation, please remember to include a current voice and fax number, as well as your email address at the top of the form.

**Procedure #1:** HRO-sponsored technical training to be held at NRL.

- Employee's division submits an approved DD-1556 to Code 1810CM. This DD-1556 must include procurement information; i.e., cardholder name, telephone number and credit card number with expiration date.
- Please include the employee's valid voice phone number, an email address for confirmation of registration, and Social Security number and employment level (i.e., NP-855-III) for entry into the employee's training record.
- Remember that the HRO is the point of contact for registration of NRL employees for these courses. The division, employee or cardholder should not contact the vendor directly.
- Nomination deadlines will be strictly adhered to.
- Cancellation deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Cancellations should be emailed to Cheryl Miller by indicated deadline. No-shows or cancellations received after the deadline will result in a charge to the cardholder's credit card for the per person course fee.



**Procedure #2:** HRSC-sponsored generic training to be held at NRL or other designated locations.

- Employee's division submits an approved DD-1556 to Code 1810CM. This DD-1556 must include procurement information; i.e., cardholder name, telephone number and credit card number with expiration date.
- Please include the employee's valid voice phone number, an email address for confirmation of registration, and Social Security number and employment level (i.e., NP-855-III) for entry into the employee's training record.

- Remember that the HRO is the point of contact for registration of NRL employees for these courses. The division, employee or cardholder should not contact the vendor directly.
- Nomination deadlines will be strictly adhered to.
- Cancellation deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Cancellations should be emailed to Cheryl Miller by indicated deadline. No-shows or cancellations received after the deadline will result in a charge to the cardholder's credit card for the per person course fee.

**Procedure #3:** HRO-sponsored management training or advertised "no cost" training.

- Employee's division submits an approved NRL In-House Nomination Form (HQ-NRL 12410/3 (Rev 8-96), which is available from your Administrative Office, the Forms Supply Store, and from site <http://personnel1.nrl.navy.mil/hrforms>). Send form to Cheryl Miller, Code 1810 or fax to (202) 767-8311.
- Please include the employee's valid voice phone number, an email address for confirmation of registration, and Social Security number and employment level (i.e., NP-855-III) for entry into the employee's training record.
- Nomination deadlines will be strictly adhered to.
- Cancellation deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Cancellations should be emailed to Cheryl Miller by indicated deadline. No-shows or cancellations received after the deadline will result in a charge back to the employee's division for the per person course fee.

**Contractors and Other Government Personnel:** Contractors and other Government personnel are eligible to attend HRO sponsored courses on a space available basis. If interested, they should call or email Cheryl Miller for further information.

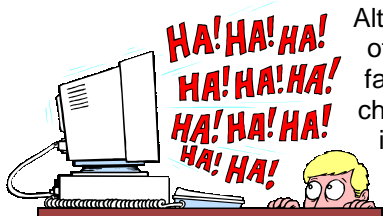
## Computer Based Training (CBT)

Computational Support Services Division (CSSD) and HRO offer no cost CBT which is currently set up to run on Windows operating systems. This training will be available in the near future for MacIntosh or Unix systems. CSSD will forward completion of CBT courses to the HRO for entry into employee's training record. CSSD also provides a multi-media library (video and CD-rom) of training materials for your convenience.



## Human Resources Office

If you missed the introductory class offerings and require assistance, please email Cheryl Miller. Courses include computer programming and software, business, financial, and management. A complete listing can be accessed from the training opportunities link provided on the HRO web site. If you require assistance with the listed course offerings, curriculum modification for your division, or systems support, please call John Douglas at 767-4129.



Although the alternative method of CBT is not entirely new, it is fairly new at NRL. As with most changes or new things, unfamiliarity tends to breed participant hesitancy or apprehension. Rapidly changing technology makes learning essential to

maintain competencies or to improve job performance. CBT is certainly not for every employee but it does offer an alternative method to those employees seeking convenient or self-paced training or even refresher training. Employees have hectic workdays and often find it difficult to set aside several days away from their office to attend traditional classroom training. CBT allows individuals to manage their time at their location choice for training. Employees can train in their office, at home, or in a computer-lab environment. For the beginning or advanced learner to the employee just requiring refresher training, CBT offers the opportunity to pace their training in order to meet their needs but most importantly employees will gain knowledge to enhance their job performance.

### Long-Term Training Applications

**Approved applications for LTT are due to Code 1810 by February 1, 2001. Applications will not be accepted after that date.**

NRL sponsors programs intended to keep professional employees abreast of advances in their fields or enable them to take additional job-related graduate courses that are not for the purpose of acquiring a degree. The four programs are: the Edison Memorial Graduate Training Program, the Select Graduate Training Program, the



Naval Postgraduate School Program, and the Advanced Graduate Research (Sabbatical) Program. Applications for all of the programs must include a narrative rationale, various levels of approval, background material, completion of standard forms, and recommendation letters.

All four programs are competitive and require applicants to have a Bachelors or Masters degree in a field appropriate to the requested area of study. Additionally, the candidates must have demonstrated the ability for advanced study, have recognized stature in

their field and meet the service requirement. One year of employment at NRL is required for the Edison Memorial and Select Graduate programs. A minimum of two years of service at NRL is required for the Naval Postgraduate School Program and at least six years Federal civil service (four of those years at NRL) is required for the Advanced Graduate Research Program. The Advanced Graduate Research Program has been expanded to include “**sabbaticals**” **internal to NRL**. These “internal sabbaticals” can be spent at NRL-DC, NRL-SSC, NRL-MRY, or involve assignments between NRL sites. They will be subject to all the rules and requirements of the existing Advanced Graduate Research Program.



To make an appointment to obtain further information about applications or approval procedures, contact Lauren Bowie at (202) 767-8314; DSN 297-8314.

## TRAINING SCHEDULE

### **COURSE: EFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL BRIEFING AND PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES**

**Dates/Time/Location:** November 14-16, 2000;  
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Bldg. 72, Rm. 120

**Registration Procedures:** See Procedure # 3

**Nomination/Cancellation Deadlines:** Nomination forms must be received not later than October 31, 2000. Cancellations must be emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on November 3, 2000 or the employee's division will be charged the per person fee of \$150.00 for a no-show fee.



**Description:** This course is designed for supervisors, project managers, or branch chiefs in the scientific or research areas at NRL. Other employees may attend on a space available basis. If you want to speak with greater confidence, project greater poise in delivery techniques, deliver a clear and focused presentation, and much more – then this workshop is for you!! Utilizing videotaping with playback and participant activities combined with training manuals, this workshop prepares speakers at all levels of an organization to make presentations with effectiveness from any platform.

**Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone at all.**

**---Gladys Browyn Stern**

## COURSE: CONTRACTING OFFICER'S REPRESENTATIVE (COR) TRAINING

**Dates/Time/Location:** December 18-20, 2000;  
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Bldg 72, Rm. 120

**Registration Procedures:** See Procedure #3

**Nomination/Cancellation Deadlines:** Nomination forms must be received not later than December 6, 2000. Cancellations must be emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on December 8, 2000 or the employee's Division will be charged the per person fee of \$200.00 for a no-show fee.



**Eligibility:** Mr. Giancola of Procurement Training Associates will present this course. Employees seeking appointment as a COR are eligible to attend. There are no prerequisites; however, it is strongly recommended that the three-day course, Contracting at NRL: The Pre-Award Phase, be completed prior to taking this course.

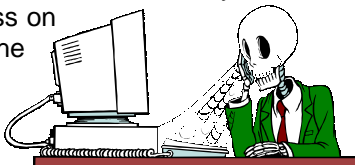
**Description:** This course covers the relationship between contract type, contract administration and contract monitoring. The role of the COR at NRL, basic rules of contract interpretation, and resolution of problems in contract administration are discussed.

## COURSE: PERL PROGRAMMING

**Dates/Time/Location:** December 4-8, 2000;  
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Bldg. 72 Annex

**Registration Procedures:** See Procedure #1

**Nomination/Cancellation Deadlines:** Nomination forms must be received not later than November 20, 2000. Cancellations must be emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on November 24, 2000 or the cardholder will be charged.



**Cost/Vendor:** ITDC, 4680 Parkway Drive, Suite 105, Cincinnati, OH 45040, Vendor Source 11-623-1697. The cost per person fee of \$900 is based on a full class of 10; however, this price may be reduced if more people attend.

**Description:** PERL is a high-level, multi-purpose language. It offers a wide range of functions for programming, system administration, distributed computing, and internet applications. To gain the most from his course, you must have knowledge of UNIX fundamentals and experience with the UNIX commands and utilities. The objectives of this course are to learn: the fundamentals of PERL; how to program in PERL;

how to do common tasks in PERL; use command substitution and command history to construct pipeline commands; and write PERL programs using UNIX utilities to build powerful applications in a short time.

## COURSE: CONTRACTING AT NRL: THE PRE-AWARD PHASE

**Dates/Time/Location:** January 24-26, 2001;  
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Bldg. 72, Rm. 120

**Registration Procedures:** See Procedure #3

**Nomination/Cancellation Deadlines:** Nomination forms must be received not later than January 10, 2001. Cancellations must be emailed to Cheryl Miller not later than close of business on January 12, 2001 or the employee's division will be charged the per person fee of \$200.00 for a no-show fee.

**Eligibility:** Program personnel serving as technical contracting representatives and others in positions related to contracting are eligible to attend. It is strongly urged that all NRL CORs take this course prior to the required COR course. (Completion of this course meets the annual Contracting Officer's Representative refresher-training requirement.)

**Description:** Mr. Giancola of Procurement Training Associates will present this course. This three-day course covers the acquisition process from identification of the requirement through the contract award. It is designed for program officers, requisitioners, COR and other NRL employees who need to utilize the contracting process to achieve program objectives. Topics include contracts, grants, interagency and cooperative agreements, Broad Agency Announcements, Small Business Innovation Research, Statements of Work, specifications, preparation of Procurement Information Processing System procurement request package, technical evaluation plan, and competitive and non-competitive (sole-source) selection procedures. Numerous practical exercises and work samples will be included.

### The Popularity of Pumpkin Pie

According to the American Pie Council, pumpkin pie is America's favorite – at least at Thanksgiving time. The rest of the year, apple is number one and pumpkin is a distant second. Here's a list of the top five favorite pies for Thanksgiving:

1. Pumpkin
2. Apple
3. Cherry
4. Lemon Meringue
5. Pecan, Chocolate Cream, and Mincemeat (in a three-way tie)